

Art of Resilience

Structure of the workshops:

With reference to the [Boing Boing Resilience Framework](#), our programme of workshops follows a structure to support our participants, with significant space for them to wander from this as their confidence and sense of agency grows.

“...expressing themselves through art or creative activity really has an impact on their emotional well-being and allows them the space to create coping strategies of their own.”

- Teacher

“When children have an opportunity to learn in a playful way where they have some agency, where they’re active, where they get to be involved and collaborate, it leads to the gold standard of learning: transfer. ‘You take something you learned in one context and apply it to another and when you can create environments in which these things are exemplified, that’s when you get real learning.’” - Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, Professor of Education (Your Brain On Art, Susan Magsamen and Ivy Ross)

CHECK IN BELONGING

- The check in at the start allows the opportunity for all participants to feel comfortable and valued.
- We create a comfortable, relaxed, enclosed space within the gallery for our group to set the scene for our workshops.



“Every child was made to feel like they belonged in the gallery and in the sessions.” - Pupil

“I’ve loved them looking at art differently, and they’re working together, with children they’d never normally work with.” - Teacher

CLARITY OF THEME AND INTENTION **COPING**

- Each workshop has a clear connection with a 'building block of resilience' that will occur through the creative process, which is recognised by self-awarded stickers.
- This extension of vocabulary helps the children to explore the art, their creative process and the concept of resilience more effectively.



Above: Stickers, recognising of each time the children noticed they were using their imagination during their creative process, Armitage Primary School, Summer 2022

"All of the sessions had a clear link with a specific area of resilience, which was referenced throughout." - Teacher

"I thought that the sessions worked in a way that impacted on the children dramatically but without them realising." - Teacher

LOOKING - THINKING - SHARING **CORE SELF**

- The focus on slow, mindful looking and discussing an art work encourages confidence in self expression and divergent thinking, setting the scene for the creative activity to follow.



Above: Discussing art works with children from Rushbrook, 2022

"The children were allowed to explore themes in a safe environment and their ideas were listened to and expanded upon. Children were allowed to guide the sessions and the artist listened to them respectfully, sometimes adapting the sessions to accommodate their own ideas." - Teacher

"I enjoyed going to the gallery because we go to do fun things and we got to talk. I would go there again because I would like to look at more art." - Pupil

THINKING - MAKING - ACTIVITY **LEARNING**

- Time and space is allowed for the creative process to develop without pressure or judgement. Each activity uses simple, accessible materials and processes that can be easily replicated outside of the gallery environment. The activity is carefully considered to allow each child to work just outside of their ability level, to encourage individual expression, problem solving and a state of 'flow'. Flow is being fully present in, and absorbed by, an activity.



Above: Work in progress in the galleries during Nature and Connections sessions with Harpur Mount and Plymouth Grove pupils, Autumn term, 2022

"Each session had a theme for the day and a specific piece of art and once they were immersed they were captured (we all were) in that moment. Children have been offered without realising a chance to escape from their own worries. The artist created moments of calm with simple activities. There was never any pressure to finish or perfect anything and the sessions were allowed to run as the children carried them." - Teacher

"My favourite artwork was the swing and the table I made, I felt calm and happy. The art gallery lessons have shown me not to give up. I have now started sketching at home!" - Pupil

"Each week is mysterious and surprising, you never know what you're going to make and what's in the box." - Pupil

SHARING AND CONNECTING **BELONGING**

- Reflecting on each other's work (both during the creative process and at the end of the making time) allows sharing of ideas, discoveries, and successes and failures, which promotes confidence and further divergent thinking. It also helps to build healthy relationships with others.



Above: examples of work created at the end of Space, Balance and Nature workshops with Harpur Mount and Plymouth Grove Primary schools, Autumn term 2022

"I felt like myself because art brings me joy! It has changed me as a person because I feel like I've improved. I feel kind of sad because I want to go back." - Pupil

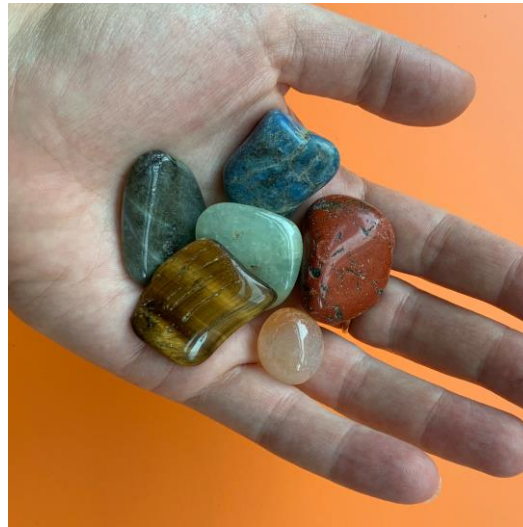
"Resilience is becoming less worried about setbacks." - Pupil

"Creativity helps you find solutions." - Pupil

"Art can help you think through things." - Pupil

"I felt that the freedom to be outside the classroom and explore the themes slowly, developing week by week, provided a really rich, in depth experience. I also liked the way that previous learning was referenced and expanded on during each session." - Teacher

Additionally, in some workshops, small prompts to take away each week allow each child to have a pocket sized object to remind them of their experiences during the session that have helped them



build both their creativity and resilience skills.
Examples of pocket prompts

Each artist devises their own series of workshops around this structure, with reference to the Boing Boing Resilience framework. Artists use their own practice, both in terms of its concept and their lived experience of their work supporting their own wellbeing, to shape the specific content of their sessions.

“...it was fascinating to see how differently each student's artwork turned out despite the use of the same materials. This highlighted the importance of celebrating diversity and acknowledging that each individual has a unique way of expressing themselves through art. The language used throughout the sessions associated with resilience was also particularly noteworthy. The experience of exploring the gallery and discussing contemporary art was a unique opportunity for our students, many of whom had never visited an art gallery before. They were able to develop their problem-solving skills as they navigated the creative process and broadened their understanding of the world around them.” - Teacher

Participating teaching staff also comment that the project is valuable in terms of their professional development, particularly with regard to experiencing new ways to work with contemporary art, and our focus on the creative process over outcome. Some of our partner schools have since integrated some of these ways of working into their own art curriculum, with one primary school changing the way they teach art as a result of working with us.

“Doing this project has had a huge impact on the pupils involved, but also the staff who attended as well. As a school we wouldn't have been able to afford to access the workshops if there had been a cost; we wouldn't have been able to pay for CPD (continuing professional development) or courses to give us this experience.” - Teacher

Art Of Resilience is a highly reflective project, our artist team regularly check in with each other to share our learning and make adjustments to our program as it develops and grows. We also seek out opportunities to learn from our partner schools as they experience the project.

Our artist team is:

- Sam Owen Hull - Visual Art
- Kate Freeborough - Visual Art
- Josie Hepplewhite - Dance
- Léonie Higgins – Music

Belonging	Learning	Coping	Core Self
Find somewhere for the child to belong Check in for each session: discussion that allows each participant to share relevant thoughts and ideas	Highlight achievements Providing immediate feedback is an essential part of growth from a flow state - artist notices innovations and connections	Being brave I AM: Getting started, giving something a go.	Instil a sense of hope
The more healthy relationships the better CONNECTIONS: Opportunity to collaborate, share ideas & outcomes with others	Develop life skills SPACE: Finding flow, rest - coming back from flow feeling slightly stronger	Solving problems BALANCE: problem solving, challenge slightly above ability, coming back from it slightly stronger, increasing confidence.	Foster their talents Artist encourages the children to recognise and value their particular skills and interests
		Lean on others when necessary NATURE: Collaboration with others, sharing ideas, creating a group work	Help the child know his/herself DREAMS: Imagination, rest, escape, mindfulness